

Written defenses of the Indian have become common in the past few years. After over 100 years of writing what poor sports the redmen are about losing their land, white eye writers are now shedding copious quantities of tear stained copy about the playful tricks the pioneers played at the treaty tables. Nothing has been done to help the Indians' cause, but several books have gained wide sales due to the popularity of the crusade.

Since I am a squawman, backed by 22 years of living in the same lodge with a 15/16th Arapahoe woman, several investigators have asked my opinion of the Indian conflicts. No survivors of the Indian wars of the 1870s remain, so we squawmen are the only source of actual battle experience.

Living with an Indian wife is actually no different than living with a wife-wife. Once you learn to ignore a few of their peculiarities, the rules are the same. From what I have viewed of other marital contracts, I see no reason to separate Indian wives from Europe and the British Isles.

Sociologists claim that adding a dash of Irish to any of the European crosses will produce the hottest fighting blood. However, you can check hospital reports from Algeria to Zanzibar and find accounts of broom wielding incidents that will scatter the bravest matadors in all Spain. Good sluggers are found in every ethnic group. Mark females down as being dangerous and let their point of origin go. John L. Sullivan was a great hand to challenge the house in barroom brawls, but at the height of his valor he didn't mess with sewing circles.

Frankly, I think the whole matter has been overdrawn. As long as a husband's legs don't play out, he shouldn't suffer many direct hits. Modern homes are a bit small. Old grandpa did have an advantage in the big rooms of the old time houses. Nevertheless, a man in top physical shape should be able to feint or fake his way out of any crisis. Marriage wasn't intended for men that won't stay in training. I think that's the main reason doctors are always blabbing about American males being overweight. A lot of fat sure can be a handicap in a tough round.

Mental conditioning is equally important as physical training. I had a friend once who developed what amounted to wife phobia. Early in his marriage, his wife had hit him with a piece of mud chain so hard the water on his knees bubbled for two weeks.

After that episode, she'd whip him the first lick. He was so jumpy a spider couldn't have walked up behind him. Doctors tried to calm him down by tying chain links in his back belt loops, but he couldn't go a day without bucking the whole rig off. The last time I saw him he had to put on his gloves to handle a key chain.

But back to living with Indian wives. The main guideline is to never go to sleep. Indians like to chant and dance in the darkness. From midnight on, they can be expected to be so fired up that they revert back to the customs of their ancestors. That's the time to be on guard. Their attitude toward hair doesn't change. Dozing off for a few minutes could be all it'd take to wake up balder than a beer glass.

The way the ranch business is going now may disprove that the paleface outwitted the Indians. Without free buffalo meat, the herders are going to be hard put to keep things together. I'm not going to go on a crying jag in behalf of my in-laws until I see what's going to happen next. The saddest part of the saga may yet be to be written.